

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

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**DDS JOINS GOVERNOR SCHWARZENEGGER IN HONORING
STATE EMPLOYEE GOLD MEDAL OF VALOR AWARDEE
TEODORA "DORA" BONILLA**

Lanterman Developmental Center Employee Saves Freeway Crash Victim

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SACRAMENTO, December 7, 2010 – The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) joins Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in commending Teodora "Dora" Bonilla, age 28 years, a Psychiatric Technician at Lanterman Developmental Center in Pomona, for her extraordinary act of bravery and heroism to save the life of another. Ms. Bonilla was honored today, along with 37 other state employees, at the 2010 Governor's State Employee Medal of Valor program at the Crest Theater in Sacramento.

Dora received the highest medal, the Gold Medal of Valor award, for her quick actions taken to save the life of a woman who had been ejected from her car during a crash on the rain-slicked Corona Expressway.

"Dora Bonilla's selfless actions demonstrated compassion and bravery to a complete stranger, and her quick judgment almost certainly prevented the woman's injury from becoming fatal," said Terri Delgadillo, Director of the Department of Developmental Services. "On behalf of the Department, we wish to extend our congratulations to Dora for being a recipient of the 2010 Governor's State Employee Gold Medal of Valor Award. It is a great honor, and we are not only proud of her for this heroic act, but we are also honored to be part of the ceremony to recognize her extraordinary act of heroism and bravery."

The incredible story began around 6:00 a.m. on Saturday, February 27, 2010, as Dora and her 10-year-old daughter were driving to Grandma's house where her daughter stayed when her mother worked weekends at Lanterman Developmental Center. On that day, the driving conditions were especially poor and lacked visibility due to the heavy rain pounding on Dora's windshield. Suddenly, she saw a body lying in the road right in front of her. She abruptly switched lanes and applied her brakes to avoid hitting the victim, causing the vehicle behind her to collide with her car. Dora exited her car, alerting the person in the vehicle behind her to block the oncoming traffic. She realized she was the first person on the scene of an accident and took swift action to prevent further trauma to the victim. Soon the paramedics arrived and took the victim to the hospital and Dora and her daughter continued on to Grandma's house; then to work at the facility. Dora reported for duty soaked by the rain and clearly shaken, but remained on duty her entire shift caring for the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities. After encountering that accident scene, Dora and her daughter are convinced that everyone needs to "buckle up!"

The Medal of Valor is awarded to state employees who have performed an extraordinary act of heroism above and beyond the normal call of duty, at great risk to their own personal safety or life, to save the life of another. There are two types of awards given: a gold medal for a special act when a state employee extends far above and beyond the normal call of duty or service performed at great risk to their own life in an effort to save human life; and, a silver medal for special service when a state employee extends above and beyond the normal call of duty or service performed at personal risk to their own safety to save human life or state property. Since the program began in 1959, over 518 medals have been awarded to California state employees. Nominations for the award are submitted by state departments and agencies to Department of Personnel Administration (DPA), which administers the program. Please visit DPA's website for more information about the honorees at www.medalofvalor.ca.gov.

For More information, contact Nancy Lungren, Assistant Director of Communications at DDS, (916) 654-1820; (cell) (916) 616-8265; or nancy.lungren@dds.ca.gov. Visit www.dds.ca.gov for information about programs and services.

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